

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

1.) Claim Amendments

The Applicant has amended claims 2-12 and 14-23. Claims 1 and 13 have been canceled herein, and claims 26 and 27 have been added. Accordingly, claims 2-12, 14-23, 26, and 27 are pending in the application. Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

2.) Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 101

On Page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 because they recite a mere abstract idea, that is, an algorithm for arranging virtual local area networks. The Applicant has canceled claim 1 and rewritten it as new claim 26. New claim 26 recites, among others, the step of forcing the switches to route traffic from the hosts through the access network. This step includes the sub-step of performing intra-subnet routing of the traffic, thereby forcing the switches to route traffic from the hosts through the access router and the access network. These steps produce a concrete and tangible result since data frames are physically transported through the access network. Therefore, the withdrawal of the § 101 rejection is respectfully requested.

3.) Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

On Page 2 of the Office Action the Examiner rejected claims 13-23 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 are rejected as failing to define the invention in the manner required by 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. The Applicant has canceled claim 13 and rewritten it as new claim 27. New claim 27 recites a system for forcing a plurality of hosts connected to an access network to communicate with each other through the access network rather than directly with each other. The recited elements of the system recite structure of the system, at least one switch, and an access router. Therefore, withdrawal of the § 112 rejection is respectfully requested.

4.) Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

On Page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 13, and 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lou, et al. (US Pre Grant Publication No. 2007/0201494 A1) in view of Lee, et al. (US Pre Grant Publication No. 2002/0080800). The Applicant has amended the claims to better distinguish the claimed invention from Lou and Lee. Claims 1 and 13 have been canceled and rewritten as claims 26 and 27, respectively. The Examiner's consideration of the amended claims is respectfully requested.

Lou discloses a network with gateways arranged to avoid crosstalk between different communication lines. This is quite different from the stated purpose of the Applicant's claimed invention. The claimed invention provides an access network where hosts are isolated from each other, not to avoid crosstalk, but to control their communications. This object is achieved by a method in an access network, where the access network comprises an access router and one or more switches wherein hosts are in communication contact with the access router via the switches. VPNs are configured in the switches, and are used to ensure that traffic from hosts is routed through the access router and the access network. (Specification page 10, line 25 through page 11, line 8).

Lee discloses VPN data switching to reduce delays, but also fails to teach or suggest an access network where hosts are isolated from each other for the purpose of controlling their communications. Thus, the purpose of Lee is also quite different from the stated purpose of the Applicant's claimed invention.

Since neither Lou nor Lee teach or suggest the use of the system and access network for the purpose claimed by the Applicant, the Applicant submits the invention recited in claims 2, 14, 26, and 27 is patentable under 35 U.S.C. § 100(b). Additionally, since neither Lou nor Lee teach or suggest a system or method for controlling the communications of hosts by forcing the traffic to go through an access network, the withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 and the allowance of claims 2, 14, 26, and 27 are respectfully requested.

On Page 6 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 3, 4, 15, and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lou in view of Lee as applied to claim 1 above and further in view of Klink, et al. (US Pre Grant Publication No. 2004/0013085). The Applicant submits that the amendments previously described also overcome the rejection based on Lou, Lee, and Klink.

The Examiner cited Klink for disclosing the use of unidirectional paths between network devices. Applicant notes that Klink discloses an MPLS path, not an asymmetric downlink or uplink VLAN as claimed by the Applicant. Additionally, Klink also fails to disclose or suggest configuring asymmetric downlink or uplink VLANs for the purpose of forcing host traffic to be routed to an access router, thereby enabling the access network to control the communications of the hosts. Therefore, the withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 and the allowance of claims 3, 4, 15, and 16 are respectfully requested.

On Page 7 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 5-9 and 17-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lou in view of Lee as applied to claim 1 above and further in view of Thompson, et al. (US Pre Grant Publication No. 2002/0022483). The Applicant submits that the amendments previously described also overcome the rejection based on Lou, Lee, and Thompson.

Regarding claims 5 and 17, the Examiner cites only Lou. However, as discussed above, Lou discloses a network with gateways arranged to avoid crosstalk between different communication lines. Lou does not teach or suggest isolating hosts and forcing their communications through an access router for the purpose of controlling the communications of the hosts. Lee also fails to teach or suggest a system or method for this purpose. Thompson is later cited only for disclosing a wireless LAN access point. Therefore, the combination of Lou, Lee, and Thompson also fails to teach or suggest isolating hosts and forcing their communications through an access router for the purpose of controlling the communications of the hosts. These features are recited in base claims 26 and 27. Claims 5 and 17 depend from base claims 26 and 27 and recite further limitations in combination with the novel elements of claims 26 and 27. Therefore, the allowance of claims 5 and 17 is respectfully requested.

For the remaining claims in this group, the Examiner specifically cites only the combination of Lou and Thompson. Thompson is cited only for disclosing a wireless LAN access point. Therefore, the combination of Lou, Lee, and Thompson also fails to teach or suggest isolating hosts and forcing their communications through an access router for the purpose of controlling the communications of the hosts. Claims 6-9 and 18-20 depend from base claims 26 and 27 and recite further limitations in combination with the novel elements of claims 26 and 27. Therefore, the allowance of claims 6-9 and 18-20 is respectfully requested.

On Page 10 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 10 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lou in view of Lee as applied to claim 1 above and further in view of Sistanizadeh, et al. (US Patent No. 6,101,182). The Applicant submits that the amendments previously described also overcome the rejection based on Lou, Lee, and Sistanizadeh.

The Examiner cites Sistanizadeh only for disclosing the retrieving of address mapping information by the access router during the user authentication procedure. Therefore, the combination of Lou, Lee, and Sistanizadeh also fails to teach or suggest isolating hosts and forcing their communications through an access router for the purpose of controlling the communications of the hosts. Claims 10 and 21 depend from base claims 26 and 27 and recite further limitations in combination with the novel elements of claims 26 and 27. Therefore, the allowance of claims 10 and 21 is respectfully requested.

On Page 11 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 12 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lou in view of Lee as applied to claim 1 above and further in view of Yamaya, et al. (US Pre Grant Publication No. 2002/0184387). The Applicant submits that the amendments previously described also overcome the rejection based on Lou, Lee, and Yamaya.

The Examiner cites Yamaya only for disclosing providing more than one access router in the access network, with VLANs configured such that the access routers belong to the same VLANs. The Applicant respectfully disagrees, but even if Yamaya was to disclose such a configuration, the combination of Lou, Lee, and Yamaya still fails to teach or suggest isolating hosts and forcing their communications through an access

router for the purpose of controlling the communications of the hosts. Claims 12 and 23 depend from base claims 26 and 27 and recite further limitations in combination with the novel elements of claims 26 and 27. Therefore, the allowance of claims 12 and 23 is respectfully requested.

5.) Prior Art Not Relied Upon


On Page 12 of the Office Action, the Examiner stated that the prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to the Applicant's disclosure. However, Applicant's reading of the cited reference, Wilson, fails to teach or suggest isolating hosts and forcing their communications through an access router for the purpose of controlling the communications of the hosts.

6.) Conclusion

In view of the foregoing remarks, the Applicant believes all of the claims currently pending in the Application to be in condition for allowance. The Applicant, therefore, respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw all rejections and issue a Notice of Allowance for claims 2-12, 14-23, 26, and 27.

The Applicant requests a telephonic interview if the Examiner has any questions or requires any additional information that would expedite the prosecution of the Application.

Respectfully submitted,



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